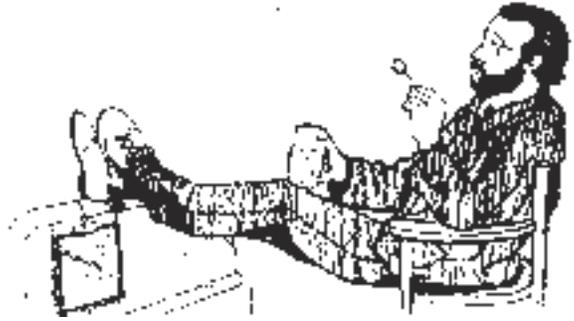


Improbable Medical Review

Improbable diagnoses, techniques, and research

compiled by Bertha Vanatian, *Improbable Research staff*



Tight Ties, Pop Eyes

“Effect of a Tight Necktie on Intraocular Pressure,” C. Teng, et al., *British Journal of Ophthalmology*, vol. 87, no. 8, August 2003, pp. 946-8. (Thanks to Dany Adams for bringing this to our attention.) The authors summarize their work thusly:

Methods: 40 eyes of 20 normal subjects and 20 open angle glaucoma patients (all male) were enrolled. IOP [intraocular pressure] was measured with an open shirt collar, 3 minutes after placing a tight necktie, and 3 minutes after loosening it. All measurements were made by the same examiner.

Conclusion: A tight necktie increases IOP in both normal subjects and glaucoma patients and could affect the diagnosis and management of glaucoma.



M. Dixon

Neck ties as vectors for nosocomial infection

Accepted: 22 November 1999

This study was carried out at The Luton and Dunstable Hospital, Lewsey Road, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU4 0DZ, UK

Sir: A number of different objects have been implicated in the transmission of nosocomial infection. This study assessed whether neck ties worn by doctors at an intensive care unit were potential vectors for infection. Heavy growths of coagulase negative staphylococcus on 2/5 ties tested suggest this is possible.

Nosocomial infection is a significant problem in critically ill patients [1, 2]. Its source may be from the patient's own body or from contact with others. The hands of

Unsavoury Ties (1)

“Multicentre Randomised Double Bind Crossover Trial on Contamination of Conventional Ties and Bow Ties in Routine Obstetric and Gynaecological Practice,” M.M. Biljan, C.A. Hart, D. Sunderland, P.R. Manasse, and C.R. Kingsland, *British Medical Journal*, vol. 307, no. 6919, December 18-25, 1993, pp. 1582-4. (Thanks to Tim Churches for bringing this to our attention.) The authors, who are at University of Liverpool, U.K., explain that:

Although bow ties were significantly less contaminated at end of first working day ($z = -2.354$, $p = 0.019$), this difference was not maintained; there was no difference in level of contamination on third day.

Unsavoury Ties (2)

“Neck Ties as Vectors for Nosocomial Infection,” M. Dixon, *Intensive Care Medicine*, vol. 26, no. 2, February 2000, p. 250. (Thanks to Kurt Verkest for bringing this our attention.) The author warns that:

The results suggest that neck ties should be considered a significant potential source of infection. Although this risk can be lessened by wearing plastic aprons when we come into contact with patients maybe we should do without neck ties altogether in critical care areas.

In the Neck (of Time)

“A Model for Time-Dependent Flow in (Giraffe Jugular) Veins: Uniform Tube Properties,” B.S. Brook and T.J. Pedley, *Journal of Biomechanics*, vol. 35, no. 1, January 2002, pp. 95-107. (Thanks to Alan Litsky for bringing this to our attention.)

We welcome your suggestions for this column. Please enclose the full citation (no abbreviations!) and, if possible, a copy of the paper.